

*Dear Readers,*

*This issue of the Review comprises a report on a seminar held on Monday 17 November at Friends House Euston Road with the title 'Hard Times', which focused on what can be done in the way of conflict transformation or other forms of nonviolent intervention at the height of an armed conflict or humanitarian disaster. The decision to hold a seminar on this theme was prompted by the recognition that much conflict transformation work perforce takes place in the period leading up to armed conflict or disaster in an effort to avert it, or in the 'post-conflict' period, and that more thought is needed on what can be done at the really critical moments. However, the seminar was also timely in that it coincided with renewed international debate about possible intervention in the Congo, Zimbabwe and other disaster areas.*

*The seminar took an unusual form in that it was combined with a regular CCTS meeting. Howard Clark, who was actively involved with the Balkans Peace Teams in Croatia and Serbia/Kosovo, and in organizing nonviolent initiatives elsewhere with War Resisters' International, gave an opening talk prior to the morning business session. The seminar continued in the afternoon with a lively discussion of his presentation. The report was written by Michael Randle.*

## Hard Times

### *Opening talk by Howard Clark*

I was asked to give this opening talk on nonviolent responses in crisis situations – Hard Times, as we have called them – on account of a book I am editing entitled *Unarmed Resistance and Global Solidarity*<sup>1</sup>, based on a project at Coventry University's Centre for Peace & Reconciliation Studies in 2006.

The first section of the book is on resistance and contains five case studies. One is on Zimbabwe, which does count as hard times, and another on Burma, but it does not take up the severest cases like the Congo and Darfur. There is a case study on the overthrow of Milošević in Serbia with a commentary from Ivana Franović from the Centre for Nonviolence about the limits of what people power achieved. Another contribution by Mauricio García Durán deals with Colombia, where the term civil resistance is used in a very broad sense. In the usage there, to live is to resist, to form a community is to resist, to show your determination to live without arms is to resist. Mauricio cites Michael Randle's definition of civil resistance in his book of that title but says that the Colombian definition is much wider. The other case study in this section focuses on economic power in India and is entitled 'Macro Development – Micro Resistance' because you have small localized resistance movements against major operators.

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<sup>1</sup> Pluto Press, London, forthcoming.

The second section looks at contemporary examples of nonviolent intervention. The book edited by Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan and Thomas Weber, *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders*<sup>1</sup>, was really excellent for that period. So this section deals with Peace Brigades International work in Colombia, and the Nonviolent Peaceforce in Sri Lanka and the Philippines, the International Solidarity Movement, and Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, and the International Women's Peace Service. Also with Voices in the Wilderness breaking the sanctions against Iraq.

The third section looks at the bases on which people form relations of solidarity. This section is by no means comprehensive, but there are pieces about diasporas, Women in Black, War Resisters International's work with conscientious objectors, a short piece on the blockade of Chinese arms shipment to Zimbabwe to illustrate the power of workers, and the World Social Forum as an example of the anti-Globalisation/pro Global Justice movement. The piece on gay and lesbian regional organising in Africa is particularly interesting in showing an alternative to the north-south axis of solidarity.

The final section looks at problems and debates. One of the debates is on Western based democracy promotion, in particular in relation to the 'colour revolutions' in Serbia, Georgia and the Ukraine; another is on nonviolence training, with a piece from George Lakey about introducing training in Britain.

I'll move on now to the work of CCTS. At the start, and under its initial name of the Coordinating Committee for Conflict Resolution Training in Europe, we were responding to the dark times as we saw them in former Yugoslavia – though they were to get darker – and more generally in Eastern Europe. We saw ourselves as contributing mainly either to conflict prevention, or subsequently to conflict resolution at the end of an armed conflict. Clearly in a long-running and persistent armed conflict you find things to do, but there are also panicky moments, such as when the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo was unleashed, which throw everything up in the air. When this committee started we were all thinking very much in terms of skills transfer – which was one of the first things we threw out of the window. The original aim was to multiply the number of conflict resolution trainers prepared to work on ethnic conflicts in East and Central Europe and Yugoslavia, and we allowed ourselves eighteen months in which to do this. But almost as soon as Adam Curle, the moving force behind the setting up of the committee, set foot in Osijek, Croatia, he concluded that this was not what was needed. So the focus shifted to accompanying civil society groups working in these areas.

There is a lot of scholarship around social movements at the moment, and some of the leading scholars, particularly a pair called Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, emphasize the role of information exchange in transnational movements. So you would look at Amnesty International and see how it mobilizes support. I regard both skills transfer and information exchange as important but for me the central thing has to be relationships. In the case of accompaniment, the prime actors are those who are living in the situation, and this affects very much what happens, especially in dark times.

I was involved in the Balkan Peace Teams, and when the bombing of Kosovo was about to start the question arose as to whether or not we were going to withdraw the team. The OSCE observers were all withdrawn to clear the way for the bombing. We had three people in the team, and only one of them was actually in the country so he came out as there was no point in his staying. But what would have been the role of the team if there was a proper team there? I remember Oxfam a few years earlier had a project in Rwanda on nonviolence and democratization, and the moment the genocide began they pulled out their people. I think it is particularly difficult to look at hard times from the accompaniment perspective because you are not the protagonist and you have more choice about the risks you take.

I will be talking more broadly, but let me say something about the book's discussion of nonviolent intervention, or rather about the war situations which are covered in the book. There are two contributions on Colombia, Mauricio's one discussing the civil resistance of the peace communities,

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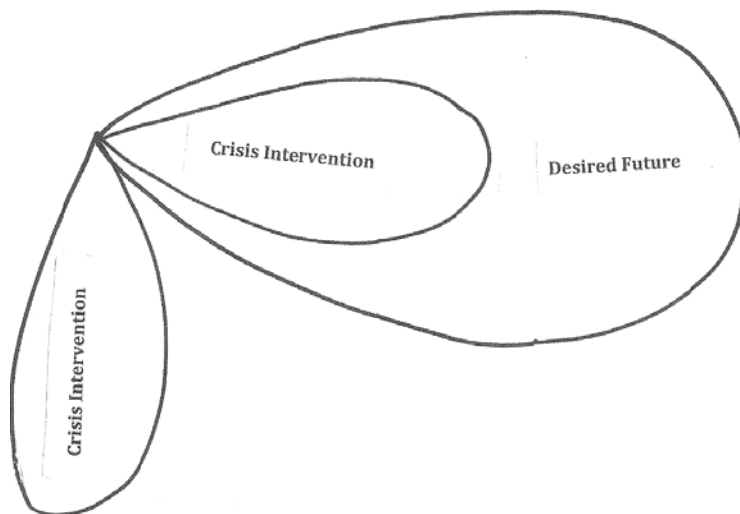
<sup>1</sup> Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawai'i, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 2000

and one on the PBI approach to accompaniment. PBI's approach is very strategic. They identify the chain of command of the authorities they need to reach. There are certain officers who are supposed to be monitoring human rights, either the equivalent of Ombudspeople or District Attorneys, and the PBI practice is to make regular visits to them to present accounts of what they are observing, very carefully working out what the risks are, how they can affect the risk and the perception of risk. The contributor on PBI to the book, Quique Eguren, co-author of a major study of the impact of PBI, interviewed generals in Guatemala who said that the presence of PBI actually made a difference to them because they didn't know who was behind it. It wasn't just the fact that there were international witnesses, but that they might be able to reach influential people in the US and so influence US policy to Guatemala. And, to return to Colombia, you have instances where the US Congress halted some military assistance to the Colombian military in response to atrocities against the peace communities.

One of the Ecumenical Accompaniment volunteers, Ann Wright, who had also been with PBI in Bogota, complained that it was a bit too much like being on an assembly line. I think this is particularly the case in big cities. By contrast in her small team with EAPPI in the village of Tulkarem in the West Bank, she was freer to follow her instincts. Anyway PBI has this system and it imposes strict limits. They never take the risk of going to see the 'illegal' armed groups, that is the guerrilla, because that could lead to them being misrepresented. Their approach has led to some debate between them and Nonviolent Peaceforce which is reflected to some extent in the book in the contribution of Christine Schweitzer. She rejects the proposition in the Eguren-Mahony book on PBI that nonviolent accompaniment works because it exercises a deterrent effect through invoking international human rights standards that the country has signed up to and working through channels that can bring pressure to bear on the human rights violators.

The Nonviolent Peaceforce approach is represented more intelligently by Christine than by a lot of Peaceforce spokespeople. Peaceforce do approach guerrilla fighters, and, for instance, go to the Tamil Tigers and ask them to free people they have kidnapped. They are operating in a very different context from PBI but they are saying that traditional peacemaking methods of trust-building do function in nonviolent accompaniment; it isn't only deterrence. Their latest project in the Philippines is actually about monitoring the ceasefire at the invitation of the local Peace Council in Mindanao who wanted the monitoring to be carried out in a nonviolent way. These are nonviolent experiments in situations that are not particularly dark. Colombia is very dark at times but you feel people get used to it. One of the factors about the really dark times is that you lose your reference points. You think 'My God what it happening? The shit is hitting the fan!' – to put it metaphorically. So there is a strong pressure on you to do something abnormal.

This is where I fall back on John Paul Lederach – as demonstrated in his nested paradigm:



The large oval bubble represents the Desired Future, with positive Crisis Intervention represented by the smaller bubble inside it. This enclosed bubble is something that can contribute to making the long-term future possible. It's certainly not what is represented by the third bubble on the left of the diagram which goes outside the desired future. In my experience it is existing relations with people in an area that provide the basis for intervention in situations of extreme crisis. The test for assessing local actors is: Are they social action groups or simply NGOs set up for convenience? It is the relationship with their own community which is crucial.

During the period of NATO's bombing of Kosovo, the Committee commissioned me to write a paper about peace after the war for a seminar on that topic. People came from DFID's Conflict Resolution Unit, and there were quite a few other people from outside our usual circle. We avoided any discussion of military intervention as such, though a lot of people were exercised by that issue. For me Kosovo highlights the fact that the crisis point is not the time to get into a debate about military intervention if that is not part of your model because you don't have the information. The information that was coming out during the war in Kosovo gave severely exaggerated figures of the numbers being killed; the NATO figures were ten times higher than they actually proved to be. You had the DFID minister, Clare Short, lying through her teeth, saying 'Yes, we are preparing the peace'. In one interview she claimed that they had identified people in the villages – total crap! Once the NATO troops arrived you realized they had no idea what they were doing.

If you have worked out a future based on nonviolence, you really need to stick with that approach and not switch at a moment of crisis. You also have to ask yourself if an army is suddenly going to change its colours. In Kosovo there were Serbian officers who made notes on the war crimes they witnessed which they later presented in evidence against other soldiers. There are so many unknown factors at a point of crisis that it is not the time to revise your model. Afterwards, however, you really do need to look at it.

However, this leaves you in a frankly marginal position. You are looking at small things that can be done – and most of them you should have thought of earlier. You are looking at protection. Are there places that can be opened up? Are there institutions, such as universities or churches, that can provide some measure of protection when there are large-scale population movements? What programmes can be quickly mounted for displaced persons and refugees at the next stage?

In terms of nonviolent resistance, which is clearly a major thing for me, it's very hard to think of instant strong reactions. The archetype might be Operation Omega to Bangladesh during its war of independence. It was launched in June 1971 and its participants got there and did their actions in October and November, which was very quick. But the only reason they could act that quickly was that they were the same group of people who had prepared something similar for the Biafra war. They didn't manage to get things organized in time for Biafra, but they had all their networks in place for moving on to the next crisis point in Bangladesh. And they did manage to do that – they ran the Pakistani blockade and confronted it with nonviolent action. Normally, however, nonviolent action takes a lot longer than that to organize. Narayan Desai and the Gandhian movement in India wanted to mount a freedom march into Bangladesh, but the Indian army invaded before that could be organized.

So large-scale nonviolent resistance tends to be slow-acting and takes time to organize. We have seen a lot of hastily organized projects like the interventions into Bosnia in the 1990s which were confused in their methods (did they want UN military escorts?) and in their demands ("Something must be done" but what and who by?) The Quakers actually appointed someone to counsel people wishing to go on one such march, and it was considered something of a triumph that hardly any Quakers did so in the end because the objectives were very vague and had more to do with creating a climate for military intervention.

In contrast to this, the other issue which comes up is constructive engagement and how you speak truth to power in these situations. And as I'm in Friends House, I'll come out with a little bit of my previous attitude! When I worked for Peace News, I was warned by a very good Quaker, Hugh Brock, who said: 'Whenever you have a doubt about an issue and there are two pacifist lines, look what they are saying in Friends House and go the other way!' He said they always prefer a quiet word in the ear of someone in power, rather than actually putting it out there and saying – 'This has gone too far'.

Someone else from that same period, Devi Prasad, who was secretary of WRI, once remarked – 'Quakers, oh yes. They like speaking half-truths to half-power!' I am not sure of the context in which he said that, but you could have said it of Alan Pleydell's predecessor in QPS (as it was then) with respect to the relationship with the official Peace Committees of the Soviet bloc. From what I know of Quakers today and can see of QPSW's current work, I can see there have been changes, but there are other groups who take that old attitude.

Returning again to Lederach, he says that you need to keep open the links with the insiders in the camp of the opposition, and inside all parties – and of course you do. But there is also a point where you draw the line. Maintain contacts in their camp, but speak plainly about the regime. Constructive engagement is all very well, but when someone does the kind of things Mugabe was doing earlier this year, you have to say – 'Look, we are willing to look for the best in you, we are willing to listen to what you say, but actually we've been lied to so many times, and your behaviour has gone so completely beyond the pale, that, unless things change, we don't see any possibility of constructive engagement'.

## Discussion

### *chaired by Alan Playdell*

Howard introduced the discussion session by setting out three propositions that summarized the main elements of his presentation.

***Our role is accompaniment.*** We are not the decisive central players. This is especially important to remember when we as participants come from a post-imperial power.

***Any intervention must accord with the desired future – the point made in Lederach's nested paradigm.*** The circle representing intervention must be within the one indicating the desired future, not outside it. The intervention needs to be seen as the first step towards the desired future.

***We need to recognize the limits of constructive engagement.*** Yes you maintain insider contacts, but you draw a line, beyond which you will not give a regime or other body the credibility of engaging with it in public dialogue.

Howard's third proposition was not subsequently taken up, suggesting it was one on which there was consensus among the participants. The other two provoked a wide-ranging discussion, reorganised here thematically.

## Accompaniment

Under the topic of Accompaniment a number of related issues arose which are listed in the sub-headings below.

### ***Accompaniment in periods of acute crisis: To stay or withdraw?***

Opening the discussion, one participant said the question of withdrawing in a crisis situation was a hard one at a personal level. The decision whether to stay or leave was a personal one. Was laying down one's life for something acceptable – or rather taking the risk of getting killed for something because none of us voluntarily lays down her or his life? She recalled one conference at which a well-know pacifist speaker was challenged by a Jewish member of the audience who said – 'You as a Christian are making this self-crucifixion into a wonderful thing, but for us it is absolutely anathema. You have a right and a duty to defend your own life.' She would hate to 'lay down her life' – but she would also hate to rat on somebody. The task of soldiers in war is to kill, not to get killed. But they also risk getting killed, and we accept that. Some people support a so-called peacekeeping role for an army, but that too involves the risk for those involved of being killed. If we say that it is ok for soldiers to risk their lives but not for people engaged in nonviolent resistance to violent systems to do so, we are tying our hands behind our backs.

Another speaker who holds a position of responsibility within EAPPI said they pulled out their people from villages in Israel/Palestine in circumstances much less dire than those Howard had described, one where there was a risk of accompaniers losing their lives, but a fairly low risk. Although we liked to think of the Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) as volunteers they were not actually volunteers, but employees, and those in charge of the programme had a responsibility for their safety. From the outset the organizers had to struggle with the question of what degree of risk it was reasonable to expose people to in these circumstances. She dreaded hiring someone who wanted to die in the field. Individuals had a right to decide what to do with their lives, but as an employer it scared the daylight out of her to have someone like that in a team. There was, however, a difference between programmes where people take the whole responsibility for their safety on themselves, and programmes where there is an employer/employee relationship.

She agreed with Howard that the basis of our response in a crisis should be our existing relations and that we should trust the approach we had been following. In EAPPI they had always tried to establish close ties with the local community, and to be very visible so people understood why they were there

and what they were doing. In moments of crisis they would ask the advice of their local contacts about what the accompaniers should do. There were many reasons for establishing those relationships to do with developing the work, but they were also crucial when they had to make decisions like that.

Howard said the circumstances were very different if the decision about withdrawal was made in Jerusalem rather than Euston Road. The person in Jerusalem would have visited the villages concerned and would know some of the people being talked to. In the Balkans Peace Team, it was always a matter of discussion at the time, so instant decisions were never quite possible. Also, for a programme like EAPPI, a lot of the point was coming home and telling the story, whereas with, say, Oxfam's programme in Rwanda, which had been running for a number of years, the results had to be measured in terms of what actually was achieved in that situation. That gave the employer a different responsibility.

Alan asked Howard about the relative advantages of the decision-making process in the Balkan Peace Team as compared to that of EAPPI, where the decision was taken out of the hands of the people on the ground. The risk with the Balkans Peace Team approach, he would think, was that there would be a lack of direction at a moment of crisis which could put everybody at risk. However, there could also be an advantage in terms of finessing what could be done and making judgments about the reality of the security situation on the ground by debating it in real time.

Howard said that in Christine's piece on the Nonviolent Peaceforce in the book, she emphasized that the security of their volunteers depended on the local community and the relationship they had built up with them. She could also have added that local people could give them warnings and exercise restraint on people who might threaten them. That was part of the deal. In the Philippines, the Peace Council who had had requested them to come to Mindinao insisted that it was up to them to guarantee the security of the volunteers.

### ***Ambiguities of Accompaniment***

The discussion on withdrawal overlapped at various points with one on some the ambiguities of accompaniment, including the radically different situation of accompaniers and the local people with whom they worked.

Howard said that the notion that the presence of internationals necessarily afforded protection was illusory. Sometimes it compounded the risks. In Kosovo, local people were beaten up for taking things to the CSCE monitoring mission, and were beaten up after the mission left for having had contact with them. The EC monitors in Croatia became a target for attacks, and in many countries NGO members have been kidnapped and in that respect their presence introduced an additional element of risk.

One participant remarked that it was always an uncomfortable situation when the internationals pulled out and the people who lived and worked there were left to fend for themselves. On one occasion he had been staying with the head of the International Federation of the Red Cross in Sierra Leone who proudly told him of the plan he had for himself and his family to escape by boat to Guinea; but there was no escape plan for local people, or any consideration at all given to what might happen to them. It came home to him then that the presence of internationals could sometimes actually endanger local people. The government there accused the International Red Cross (IRC) of running guns to the rebels and in consequence the IRC pulled out, though of course leaving the Sierra Leone Red Cross workers in place. These were then attacked by people who did not appreciate the difference between the IRC and the local Red Cross.

In the case of the IRC, a lot of power rested with the director in the country concerned. You could have protocols and directives, but it still came down to the personality of that director. And because the IRC changed the director every six to twelve months there was no real continuity. So the poor local staff were having to deal with this constant changing of things. There was all the difference in the world between the situation of outside people who could come and go, and that of people who lived in some of these places. People often said to him that what they wanted was accompaniment but at the end of the period he was free to leave. It came home very strongly to him last April in Gaza. He

could go in for two weeks and come out again. There were risks involved in that, but the people he was working with had no right of movement; they were stuck there. He had a desperately uncomfortable feeling about leaving, but they thought it was amazing that someone was prepared to go in and be with them for a couple of weeks. So there was a disjunction between how he was left feeling at the end of his two weeks there and the positive things the people there were expressing. So he often left feeling he hadn't a clue what he had done there, but people seemed really pleased that he had turned up. Sometimes just turning up was incredibly important and symbolic in itself.

Another participant who had been involved in accompaniment said the only time they experienced something akin to the situation of local people was when she and her colleagues went in for a week and then found it was impossible for them to come out for the next two. They had lost their flats, and faced various other problems. The levels of frustration and worry at that point got very high – and yet it was meaningless in terms of the big picture.

She went on to say we had been using the term accompaniment in different senses, sometimes talking about it in terms of moral obligations, sometimes of legal obligations. She had no institutional base, or any legal responsibility to accompany or not accompany anyone, but she had some very strong and important relationships with people, that in some cases went back over twenty years. That relationship was built around the fact that what she did was to come and go. So the issue was not just the relationship, but the nature of it, what it was founded on, and the understandings inherent within it. Earlier that year she spent a day with Responding to Conflict, looking at accompaniment from their perspective, and at the end of the day they almost reached the point of saying they didn't think they did accompaniment and they didn't like the term anymore. The term accompaniment conveyed for them the idea of a vague moral obligation and not the kind of relationship they wished to have with people.

Another participant also said he felt there was a sense of 'us and them' with accompaniment, and that we, the 'us', were doing good for 'them'. He was not comfortable with that. He was not against accompaniment and had himself been involved in it. But were we facing up to the fact that that we gained a lot from it?

To this another participant responded that we had defined accompaniment in at least two different ways. One was providing protection by the physical presence of people in the manner of PBI and others. But we had also spoken about accompaniment as basically solidarity. The two were interrelated. Solidarity was what permeated the desire to provide a presence for somebody's protection. The previous speaker had expressed his unease about what he saw as a 'them and us' relationship in accompaniment. She did not think that was the case with EAPPI, since they were there because local people had asked them to come. It was the local people who had seen an added value in the presence of people from outside, and had definite ideas about where and when their presence could be helpful. They saw it as helpful in times of crisis or difficulty. Added value also came from the fact that these people would tell the outside world what was happening. The conclusion of both local actors and accompaniers was that, on balance, the outside presence was a positive thing, although undoubtedly there would be instances where the perpetrators would want to demonstrate that it was counterproductive.

### ***Accompaniment in the war against women***

In the CCTS regular meeting that preceded, and partly overlapped with, the seminar, one participant had spoken of her work to bring women's voices into the global debate, and of the extraordinary level of violence against women across North Africa where the personal status codes sanctioned violence and killings when the family honour was judged to have been compromised.

Referring back to this, one participant said it reinforced her view of a global war against women. She was not a victim of it in the sense of experiencing the kind of massive violence on a day-to-day basis that is structured into society – the pattern of the way people behave and the legal systems. But the violence is gross, and in a lot of societies you were a non-person as a woman. She had in mind the extraordinary violence against the women trying to make a tiny crack in that enormous wall of oppression, and the fact that the very place you might go to be safe – the home – was the place that

wasn't safe. What kind of accompaniment or protection could be offered to women who wanted to speak out and live their daily lives free from this violence?

The participant who had made the contribution in the morning said that for her the way to accompany these women was to refuse to accept the definition of what was private and to make the private public. It was a huge step forward that rape had been recognized as a war crime, but rape was a crime, whether in war or peace, in public or in private. So it was a matter of trying to make everything public and not accepting the definition of privacy which is a social construct.

## **Advocacy and Accompaniment**

Howard spoke about the relationship between accompaniment and advocacy. Your relationship to people in a conflict area meant that you were making and generating policy recommendations that went much wider than your own group's practice. That could be a major problem. In the 1990s, WRI had a very difficult period when people they were working with in former Yugoslavia were issuing declarations in favour of military intervention. WRI had to say – 'Hang on!' We can't go with you there, but we still want to keep working with you and to continue the discussion'.

However, he continued, that did raise a concern about those transnational groups who advocate policies that are not in step with those of the groups they claim to be in solidarity with. It particularly applied to their relations with indigenous groups in the areas of mining and forestry. The willingness of corporate bodies to engage with civil society and stakeholders in the debate about whether particular developments should go ahead could be seen on the one hand as an extension of democracy but on the other hand as giving the corporations more power. These multi-stakeholder processes did not give the indigenous people the veto they demanded. Bodies like World Wildlife Fund were involved in licensing sustainable forestry, which quite often went against the wishes of the people who would be displaced by the forestry, and the logging it involves. The solidarity involved in accompaniment did not preclude us from maintaining our own principles, so you didn't necessarily advocate what the group you were working with wanted. But you really had to think of the power imbalances when it comes to lobbying the UN and other institutions where the groups in the global north have so much more clout.

Alan said that, as a nine-year-old, his schoolroom was festooned with posters of The Shell Guide to the Countryside! And a couple of years ago, someone had invited him to the Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year Exhibition, which was full of wonderful photographs but was also part of a huge and powerful PR machine. Shell were basically saying they were ecologically responsible even while they were despoiling the planet.

There were dilemmas too for bodies like EAPPI and, indeed, QPSW. EAPPI's ecumenical accompaniment programme was predicated on an intention to see the occupation lifted. It called itself non-political – or at any rate some EAs he had spoken to described it that way – but when you had such a steeply raked playing field, were you going to talk to people endlessly while they continued with their depredations, or adopt a basic position of advocacy from the outset in recognition of the power differential? He did not know what impact such advocacy would have on whom you stood with or whom you talked with.

Responding, the participant closely involved with EAPPI said she would be very surprised to hear any EA stating that EAPPI was non-political. They adhered to the principle of *impartiality*, but there was no contradiction between that and demanding an end to the occupation. Other human rights organizations argued that according to International Humanitarian Law, occupying another country is not illegal, but that many of the practices of the Israeli government in the Occupied Territories were illegal. However, for EAPPI, the occupation itself is wrong, whether or not it is illegal under International Humanitarian Law. And obviously they do also say that humanitarian laws are being violated, and that Israel's actions are against numerous conventions. In response to this, someone commented that the occupation might not be illegal under International Humanitarian Law, but it was illegal under International Law, and the UN had found it to be so.

Another participant said there were paradoxes. Often accompaniment and advocacy didn't sit well together. But the question was on whose behalf you were doing the advocacy. If it was on behalf of the local community, that was a different thing from doing it on behalf of a powerful organization whose advocacy department had decided what policy accommodations to make without consulting the people directly affected. There wasn't necessarily a clash of interest between the company and the community, but there could be. However, one of the things you could sometimes do was to help local groups build up their advocacy skills – not necessarily at the international level where perhaps they might not have the language to be heard, but to lobby their local authority, or their local gang leader. She had worked with people who were doing that with the Tamil Tigers. They had a good idea of when they might get shot on sight approaching the Tamil Tigers and when someone might listen. It was a matter of layering the advocacy, just as we layer our analysis at different levels.

Someone else said that advocacy could sometimes be used by a government or regime against the people you were trying to support. In Zimbabwe, for example, Mugabe was all the time saying it was the West that was responsible for everything that had gone wrong – Western governments, the corporations, Amnesty International, Oxfam and the like. Part of the problem in Zimbabwe was that until recently the neighbouring African states like South Africa or Zambia had done very little to put pressure on Mugabe to change his policies.

Someone else then suggested that one way to reduce the chances of being perceived as pro-Western was to base your advocacy on international agreements which the country in question had signed up to. For a lot of the networks she worked with, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was the most useful instrument. It is not Western, having been passed unanimously by the UN thirty years ago.

Another speaker responded that international conventions didn't always provide an answer. Palestinians cite International Law and International Humanitarian Law in support of their struggle to regain their national rights, but according to International Humanitarian Law, civilian settlers must be protected. They may have been planted in occupied territory in contravention of International Humanitarian Law, but once there, they had to be protected. Oxfam produced a report some years ago on the protection of civilians in conflict, which was badly received by Palestinian NGOs because they had enormous difficulty regarding settlers as being in the same category as Palestinian civilians.

A participant with some experience of working in Zimbabwe said he would like accompaniment to be considered in relation to Zimbabwe at some point. He had raised it with PBI but obviously such an operation would take time to organise. What did one do with people who did not play by the rules? His experience was that the fact that they did not play by the rules threw up more people than would otherwise be the case who do stand for something different. There are always spaces and people in those spaces where accompaniment can happen, though it might not be at the level one expected. At the grassroots, the Catholic Justice and Peace had done some incredibly brave work. The women's network he was in contact with told him that the advantage they have is that in Zimbabwean politics women are completely discounted. That gave them some space to act. They would not be seen as a threat to the same extent as men. So oddly enough there can be an advantage in the disadvantage.

## **Military intervention and the Lederach paradigm**

Alan, as Chair, said that what came into his mind looking at the Lederach diagram was the notion of congruence. It seemed to imply that the shape of the intervention, in order to have a degree of integrity, to make sense and to have a capacity for growth, had to be in the general shape of the desired future. If it contradicted it, then, at least from Howard's value base, or from the nonviolence value base in general, it was ruled out.

One participant said a problem with the Lederach paradigm was that it assumed a consensus about what the desired future would be like. We might have a common view on this, but many of the people we work with would not share it. Indeed we might not all agree amongst ourselves about it.

Another participant said that something which came across in Howard's presentation was that there was a limit to what accompaniment could do in these crisis situations. He argued that if you had determined upon a certain course of action, and built up relationships based on that, you shouldn't abandon it at the point of crisis. That might be true of us as members of a movement or as a particular organization engaged in accompaniment. But we were also, as individuals, part of society, and we ought to say something about what we expect the government which claims to represent us should do. To take a current crisis, should one support Britain making a military contribution to a UN force in the Congo? If neither accompaniment nor any nonviolent initiative from outside could be effective in the short time when people were losing their lives, what was the responsibility for each of us as citizens in contributing to the debate about what should be done, or might have to be done, at government level? If one took an absolute line against military intervention, even by the UN, one had to face the fact that sometimes there might be no way of halting the slaughter.

But another speaker expressed her complete opposition to military intervention. She wanted to see the demilitarization of the way things were done internationally. She could not say she wanted to get rid of all wars but not this particular war now – so let's use our armies to do it. That was contradictory. She had gone to Kosovo right after the NATO bombardment, and when people said 'Hurrah for Natolian' she replied 'Don't thank me – I opposed the bombing'. People respected that, and it did not prevent continued solidarity. It was mythical to think we could deal with all these kinds of situations if only we had big enough armies to go in and sort things out. For a start it wouldn't happen because the main project of national armies, even if pooled for the UN, was to serve national interests. We would never have armies at our disposal to do the things the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) people wanted, because governments are too busy pursuing their national interest in lunatic enterprises. And those interventions were showing us just how catastrophically hopeless armies are, even with vast resources and expenditure, at quelling local fighting. We had this dream that if only we could send big enough international armies into these places to crush all nasty violence with our superior violence, the problems would go away, and people would start to live in peace. She just did not believe it.

To this another contributor responded that while she did not have the moral certainty of the previous speaker, in her experience no military intervention of this nature had resulted in producing the desired future of some kind of just society. So on empirical grounds she could reject military intervention. But she could go beyond that. People reached for the military solution, and what that did was to short circuit the possibility of other approaches being attempted. The cavalry arrive and everyone thinks it's time to jump on the horses with them or head down the nearest hole. So a particular concern of hers was how one might ensure, when a military intervention does take place, that other possibilities remain on the agenda. Although it wasn't solely about resources, money talks and governments taking part in a military intervention should be pressed to make resources available for nonviolent measures. The risk here was that if civilians went into a country in the wake of an invasion this could be interpreted as approval for the military intervention and occupation.

Another contributor said Howard's paper on Kosovo at a previous seminar was a classic example of how you could make positive proposals for the future even while a military intervention was under way. His paper was saying, ok, you've done it, but as you go through the first onslaught and you get onto the next stage, how are you going to pull out the threads of people's participation in a peaceable manner? It was good paper and cut a lot of ice on the day. You could see people from those other places, DIFID and the like, engaging with it.

The other issue we don't give enough attention to is developing alternative ways of intervening in disasters. There was a rather feeble EU monitoring team in Kosovo, which nonetheless had a considerable impact. It was only up to about a third of its intended strength, but it had still made a big difference. If there had been a really massive monitoring team it might have made a very considerable difference. At present we don't have the capacity or resources to mobilize large numbers of non-military people, but we need to do more to close that gap.

Another participant commented that the term intervention these days, was generally taken to mean military intervention. This was true in her experience even with students who had just spent weeks studying Lederach and others. There was a lot of work to be done to get across the idea that intervention can mean something different, and that military intervention is an example of failed intervention. However, if you were involved in a situation where people were being killed, and our counterparts on the ground were saying they needed protection, how do you respond? You have your position, but how do you actually handle that? What could you do at that moment? We fail to engage with that question.

Alan said it just struck him in relation to Zimbabwe and Myanmar that these were places where nobody in the West had talked about military intervention although they were obvious candidates for massive intervention. It might be that the West had no material interest at stake, but it might also be that the people in these places were so nasty that even the military interventionists could see that we would get bogged down and never be able to extricate ourselves. Then the moral question for all of us becomes more acute because it means people inside those countries, aside from their own resources, were completely at the mercy of these regimes there.

Another participant said that there was a time in the 1960s when UN military intervention was predicated on trying to keep the peace. In the end that seems to have been largely discarded because there had been some very bad examples of that approach not working. But in that period people like Brigadier Michael Harbottle, who had himself been on one of the UN peacekeeping missions, was exploring making military intervention less military. One shouldn't overlook this kind of ground. If international observers come from a body like the OSCE it would be a very official intervention, but they might have a nonviolence background and be very valuable. One should not present the choice as being simply between a pacifist and a military approach. It was not a healthy position because there were intermediate channels.

Howard said that the French government had asked the Movement for a Nonviolent Alternative (MAN) for people to take part in the Kosovo verification mission. The British had a completely different approach. A Quaker who was working for the OSCE in East Slavonia at the time wanted to be on the mission and they ruled that out. The British were only interested in having military people.

Another speaker said it was due in part to Michael Harbottle's work that the line between the police and the military was becoming more fudged. The police were becoming more militarized – witness the armed police at Heathrow – and the military in some places were becoming involved in civilian affairs. It was now difficult in places – Nepal for example – to draw a distinction between the police and the military. There were dangers here and she was not sure where this development would lead.

To this, another contributor responded that we ought to be pushing back the militarization of the police. However someone else said there were dilemmas too about that. When a young policewoman in Bradford investigating a break-in was shot dead by an armed gang in November 2005, one could hardly expect the police to go after them unarmed.

Howard said the question very precisely at these dark periods was what we had to offer. Most of what we have to offer needed to be thought of in the preparatory period. It was rare for these crises to occur out of the blue – things like the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, or the elections in Zimbabwe are programmed events that you had been expecting and preparing for. This related to the paper he gave at a previous CCTS seminar, criticizing the infrastructure for peacebuilding as described by Lederach which misses out on the combative elements, some of which are to do with protection, finding safe spaces, thinking about where people could hide, what institutions could be mobilized to put up some sort of defence. He did a training in Cambodia with a really impressive man from Ahmedabad who

had been talking about how they had tried to respond to the communal riots there, and the thinking they had to do about protection. Most of these crises involve considerable displacement, so it was also about having a strategy of accompanying the displaced, going into the camps where they lived and being ready for them.

### **Disengagement from organized violence**

Was it possible, one participant wondered, for grassroots communities to disengage from the violent practices going on around them without attracting the kind of violent repression they had experienced in Colombia? Another participant responded that communities like San José de Apartadó did not simply *disengage* from the military, but *engaged* in what, in Gandhian terms, was a constructive programme, a commitment to live the desired reality right there in the heart of all the violence. What to her was quite remarkable was that they persisted in this endeavour, despite many of their people being killed. Hallelujah for them because in a global sense that makes a difference and would inspire others.

Howard said the people who were looking for nonviolent responses to situations of war and conflict were not on their own, and even small acts of support could be significant for them. When the Vietnamese Buddhist, Thich Nhat Hanh was in the West receiving pictures from artists in Vietnam who couldn't display their work, they said how much they appreciated the fact that someone was looking at it. Communities in Colombia, including whole tribes, had decided to live without arms. It was a remarkable movement, which does feel connected to other parts of the world. When the previous speaker talked of a Gandhian style constructive programme, that was not fanciful. People from San José, for example, wanted to come to Europe to talk about the alternative technologies that they could develop. A little bit of solidarity goes a long way in these very hard situations.

However, there wasn't a low risk response to any of these situations. In 1997-98, inspired by the examples from Colombia and the Philippines, he had tried to promote the idea of communities of nonviolence in Kosovo after the fighting started. There were certainly displaced people interested in the idea but it requires a huge commitment to a nonviolent approach to mount these. Ten per cent of the members of San José had been killed by all three sides – the army, the para-militaries and the FARC. The people in them faced stark choices and had chosen to take the risk associated with living a life of dignity in a community and defying the armed actors. The accompaniment that some Catholic Church bodies had undertaken in Colombia had been terrific. For eighteen months before the foundation of the peace communities, these bodies, mainly associated with the Peace and Justice group, had been doing courageous work.

The San José people, another participant commented, were in a sense an extreme example of the courage you sometimes encountered in small groups who had not necessarily made that huge commitment of defiance, but at times of crisis sometimes come together. If you already had links with them you could do things in solidarity with them.

### ***In conclusion***

Concluding the seminar, Alan thanked Howard, all the participants, and Friends House who had provided us with an excellent venue and looked after all our needs.

**Seminar Participants:**

Nick Chavasse, International Projects Office at the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR)

April Carter, writer and lecturer on international politics and nonviolent action

Howard Clark, Former Treasurer of CCTS, Chair of War Resisters International

Paul Clifford, independent consultant and CCTS Treasurer

Simon Fisher, independent consultant, based at Oxford Brookes University

Diana Francis, independent consultant, CCTS Chair and co-editor of CCTS Review

Jane Gabriel, writer and journalist; Programme Director of Open Democracy's 50.50 editorial project

Floresca Karanasou, QPSW and the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)

Celia McKeon, Policy Director, Conciliation Resources

Stuart Morton, QPSW, South Asia programme

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Michael Randle, Minutes Secretary CCTS and co-editor of *CCTS Review*

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